

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7735

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OREP (MOFFETTXA TOBY/MILLER, OYORGE/HARKIN, TOM)

SUBJECT: CODEL MOFFETT

1. SUMMARY: CODEL MOFFETT CANCELS OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS, AND GOC REACTS ADVERSELY. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER FULL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS WITH GOC OFFICIALS AND OTHER CHILEANS (SEPTOL) CODEL HARKIN, MILLER AND MOFFETT LEFT SANTIAGO EVENING MARCH 15, IN RATHER AWKWARD CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. AT CLOSE OF BUSINESS MARCH 15 EMBOFF RECEIVED DIRECT TELEPHONE CALL FROM MINISTER OF INTERIOR GENERAL BENAVIDES STATING CODEL HAD FAILED TO APPEAR FOR APPOINTMENT WITH HIM IN AFTERNOON. AT FONMIN'S EVENING RECEPTION FOR VISITING OAS SEC GEN ORFILA, SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT EYZAGUIRRE COMPLAINED TO AMBASSADOR THAT CODEL HAD ABRUPTLY CANCELLED APPOINTMENT WITH HIM.

4. PRESS AND RADIO MORNING MARCH 16 STATE THAT BOTH BENAVIDES AND EYZAGUIRRE HAD SENT PROTEST NOTES TO EMBASSY RE ALLEGED DISCOURTESY OF CONGRESSMEN IN NOT APPEARING FOR SCHEDULED MEETINGS WITHOUT EXCUSE. GOC PRESS SERVICE ISSUED RELEASE POINTING OUT CONGRESSMEN HAD COME TO CHILE THROUGH INVITATION OF CHILEAN EMBASSY IN US AT SUGGESTION OF JUSTICE MINISTER SCHWEITZER; THAT THESE CONGRESSMEN, "DEMOCRATS OF THE KENNEDY PERSUASION," HAD HAD ACCESS TO UNOFFICIAL AS WELL AS OFFICIAL SECTORS OF OPINION;
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THAT THEY HAD BEEN PERMITTED TO SEE THREE CONVICTED POLITICAL

DETAINEES; AND THAT THE CONGRESSMEN HAD REFUSED TO LOOK AT A COLLECTION OF ARMS TAKEN FROM EXTREMISTS -- "THUS DEMONSTRATING A PRECONCEIVED AND DOCTRINAIRE STATE OF MIND."

5. PROTEST NOTE TO AMBASSADOR FROM INTERIOR MINISTER BENAVIDES REACHED EMBASSY MARCH 16. IT STATES THAT THE US PARLIAMENTARIANS HAD SOUGHT AN INTERVIEW WITH BENAVIDES THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. SAYS APPOINTMENT WAS MADE FOR AFTERNOON MARCH 16, BUT FOR UNEXPLAINED REASONS CODEL CANCELLED THE MEETING A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE SCHEDULED HOUR. MINISTER STATES THAT THIS UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE GOOD TREATMENT THAT US PERSONALITIES

HAVE RECEIVED WHEN VISITING CHILE ON OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL VISITS. NOTE CONCLUDES THAT INTERIOR MINISTER EXPRESSES HIS DISSATISFACTION REGARDING CODEL'S CONDUCT WHICH IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE RESPECT WHICH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DESERVE. TEXT POUCHED. WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE SIMILAR NOTE FROM EYZAGUIRRE.

6. CODEL STAFFER ELDRIDGE, WHO IS REMAINING IN CHILE FOR A FEW DAYS, INFORMS US THAT MEETINGS WERE CANCELLED BECAUSE OF JAM-UP OF CODEL'S APPOINTMENTS DURING LAST DAY OF THEIR STAY IN CHILE. SPECIFICALLY, DELAY AT LUNCHEON WHICH CODEL HAD ARRANGED WITH CARDINAL SILVA MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO REACH BENAVIDES' OFFICE IN TIME FOR APPOINTMENT. CODEL COULD HAVE MADE 5 P.M. MEETING WITH EYZAGUIRRE BUT DECIDED NOT TO GO FOR UNEXPLAINED REASONS. WE GATHER THAT CONGRESSMAN MOFFETT ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN TO BENAVIDES BY TELEPHONE, BUT COMMUNICATION WAS EVIDENTLY FAULTY.

7. EMBASSY WILL EXPRESS REGRET TO OFFICIALS FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE AND STATE IT IS SEEKING INFORMATION FROM CODEL ABOUT THE MATTER.

8. WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT UNDERLYING CAUSE OF THIS TEMPORARY CONTRETEMPS IS DIVIDED RESPONSIBILITY FOR CODEL WHILE HERE. PURSUANT TO CODEL'S REQUEST, WE ARRANGED FOR ONLY A FEW OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS FOR CODEL. IT ARRANGED THE REST ITSELF, WITH RESULT AS INDICATED ABOVE.

9. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, MIN BENAVIDES IS KEY FIGURE IN OPERATION OF OUR PAROLE PROGRAM, SINCE HIS MINISTRY GRANTS EXILE DECREES AND SUPERVISES INTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS GENERALLY. INONICALLY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS AFFAIR COULD UNHELPFULLY AFFECT A PROGRAM IN WHICH CODEL IS GREATLY INTERESTED. WHILE WE HOPE CHILEAN PIQUE WILL BE ONLY TEMPORARY, WE FEAR THAT GOC MAY BE SOMEWHAT LESS ACCOMMODATING TO SIMILAR US GROUPS IN FUTURE. SHOULD OTHER CODELS WISH TO VISIT, HOPE THEY WILL BE ADVISED IN ADVANCE OF IMPORTANCE OF CENTRALIZED AND NOT OVER-AMBITIOUS SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES.

10. PLEASE DISCUSS WITH CODEL AND ADVISE US SOONEST RE ANY
FURTHER COMMENT THEY BELIEVE WE SHOULD MAKE IN OUR RESPONSE
TO NOTES.
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